



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



FORESTS AS PLEASURE PARKS

A PAPER PROPOSING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL FOREST ADJACENT TO THE CITY OF WASHINGTON, PREPARED FOR PRESENTATION AT THE SECOND NATIONAL CONSERVATION CONGRESS, HELD IN ST. PAUL, SEPTEMBER 5-9, 1910

BY WILLIAM M. ELLICOTT

DELEGATE FROM THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS AND THE STATE OF MARYLAND

THE present is an opportune time to suggest that the Government undertakes to create a national forest reserve and sylvan resort on lands immediately adjacent to Washington.

Progress already made toward the development and beautification of the city and its environs assures us, in the fullness of time, of a capital which, in splendor, beauty of situation and sumptuousness of planning will be second to none.

This, happily, has been provided for by the original plan, as shown upon the

earliest maps of Washington in the Library of Congress, made more than one hundred years ago; and it is to the genius of General Washington himself that we must ascribe the wisdom which made provision for a design of such artistic merit and potential grandeur.

It was he who selected the site, and we may reasonably assume that he had a clear vision of its possibilities before a tree was cut or a line run by his engineers or surveyors. Its subsequent development under Major Pierre L'Enfant, and afterward Major Andrew

Ellicott, the founding president of West Point Military Academy, has produced a city plan superior to any so far developed. His conception of the physical development of the city, as expressed in the earliest plan, must remain a source of wonder, drawn, as it was, when the Atlantic Seaboard had a population of but three millions and the rest of the country was a wilderness which he, as surveyor, scout, commander of frontier irregulars, and afterwards as the eminent general and statesman, must have known more intimately in all its aspects than any other man of his time.

Its orderly carrying out is now in progress, and is assured through the patriotism and culture of the architects and statesmen of our generation.

It is clear, therefore, that adequate provision has been made for the development of the city proper, but to complete the picture and to give continuity and variety to the impression gained from a visit to the ideal capital in the fullness of its glory, there must be a foil or background, to contrast with the magnificence of buildings, boulevards and monuments, in order that the mind may find repose and maintain its balance. Thus it will be seen that the creation of a national forest, immediately adjacent to the capital, is a companion piece without which the group must remain incomplete.

But the provision of such a necessary adjunct should not be left to chance, since lands in the hands of private individuals or corporations may, at any time, be stripped of their native beauty and value as a field for recreation and sylvan pastime. Therefore, deliberate study must be given to the problem and an artistic ideal assumed and adhered to. Our judgment should be formed, not upon the basis of our present population, but upon more than double the present figures.

The study of forestry in America has been confined until now almost entirely to practical and commercial considerations. Our city parks, by reason of their restricted areas, have been treated, as a rule, from a point of view which has lessened their native charm, and we have

had to rely for sylvan enjoyments upon natural forests more and more remote, and difficult of access, and in most instances ruined by lumbermen, pulp manufacturers and forest fires.

It is desirable, therefore, that an example be set of forest culture on a large scale at the gateway of the nation's capital.

Throughout Europe, and especially in France, there are numerous examples of vast woodlands, much of which has become public domain. Formerly these were almost all the property of a reigning house or of powerful nobles, and there still remain magnificent forests, privately owned and devoted to purposes of sport or luxury, but yielding revenue through judicious cutting of timber under enlightened management. An example of such an estate on this side of the Atlantic may be seen in Biltmore, the property of Mr. George Vanderbilt, in North Carolina, with its splendid château designed by the great architect, R. M. Hunt.

The eminently practical and artistic French have discovered, or have at least brought to the highest state of perfection, the "*forêt de luxe*," a forest which, retaining all the grandeur and seclusion of primeval conditions, has, nevertheless, been subjected to those regulating changes and touches which enhance and magnify its native qualities for the use and enjoyment of man. Their great planners of forests have endeavored to infuse the same spirit into nature evoked by romantic authors and by painters, like Claude Lorraine, and often they have succeeded wonderfully as may be seen in Versailles, St. Cloud and Fontainebleau forests, which remain the wonders of civilization.

The patricians and philosophers of Rome, the monks of the Middle Ages, the cultured gentlemen of the Renaissance, and, best of all, the kings of France, have contributed their share of thought and effort in devising and planning for the benefit, both of soul and body, through artistic development of rural or sylvan places of recreation. All this experience is ready to hand and



AVENUE FIFTY MILES LONG NEAR NIKKO, JAPAN

should to the fullest extent be incorporated with artistic life in America.

An ordinary forest may contain striking features of beauty and interest, but generally it can be made available for enjoyment only by opening it to access and controlling its growth. Even in the primeval forest we are dependent upon game trails and paths of immemorial antiquity and upon the rivers and streams as means of circulation, without which we must cut our own roads with infinite difficulty. Therefore roads must be made, avenues cut, vistas opened, water courses improved, and, where permissible, converging alleys with buildings, cascades and even decorative gardens may be introduced. All the possibilities must be studied by the skilled planner in close sympathy both with art and nature, and from the achievements, as well as from the failures, of the past, the models for our future places of recreation must be sought.

There may be a German Schloss, a French Château, with magnificent garden, an Italian Villa, a Swiss Chalet, a Château d'eau, or we may scorn all these and say that we will invent our own resorts and have no copies, which is the best way—if we can. But for purposes of illustration, we cannot but revert to the best of existing examples, to the restaurant of the Pré Catalan near Paris, to the Grand Trianon and the "Hameau" of Marie Antoinette at Versailles, to that masterpiece of Mansart and le Nôtre, the Château and garden of Vaux-le-Pencil, to the Châteaux of the Loire, to la Granja in Spain, and the "Palace in the Wood" at the Hague. Most of such detail must be left to a future generation with keener discrimination and more leisure, but the plan must contemplate it all, or at least not render it impossible.

The meaning may be further illustrated by assuming that such a forest as is advocated might lie between Wash-



A NEW ENGLAND FOREST

PHOTOGRAPH BY WM. RADFORD

ington and Baltimore and that a main road or boulevard connecting the two cities might traverse it.

As private business would not exist in the territory covered by the woodland, the danger of using it for heavy hauling would be eliminated—the traffic between the two towns being carried by the railroads.

Imagine, then, the forests and gardens of Versailles, St. Cloud, Chantilly, Vaux-le-Vicomte, Fontainebleau, and Compiègne fused together and co-ordinated with the parking system of the city, and spread out in that territory with which we are all familiar in approaching Wash-

ington from the north, and we have a "forêt de luxe" with all the enchantment, surprises and wonders which those historic and beautiful places contain.

The heart of the Adirondack mountains might be reproduced, with lakes, waterfalls, trails and canoe routes, while elsewhere, stately avenues might be cut concentrating at a moated château, the ghost, perhaps, of Azay-le-Rideau on the Loire, where bands of equestrians might ride like Henri IV and François I, with their gay retinues. Indeed, any poetic dream might be made reality in such a place under the hand of the artist unhampered by utilitarian requirements.



A CALIFORNIA FOREST

FOREST SERVICE PHOTOGRAPH

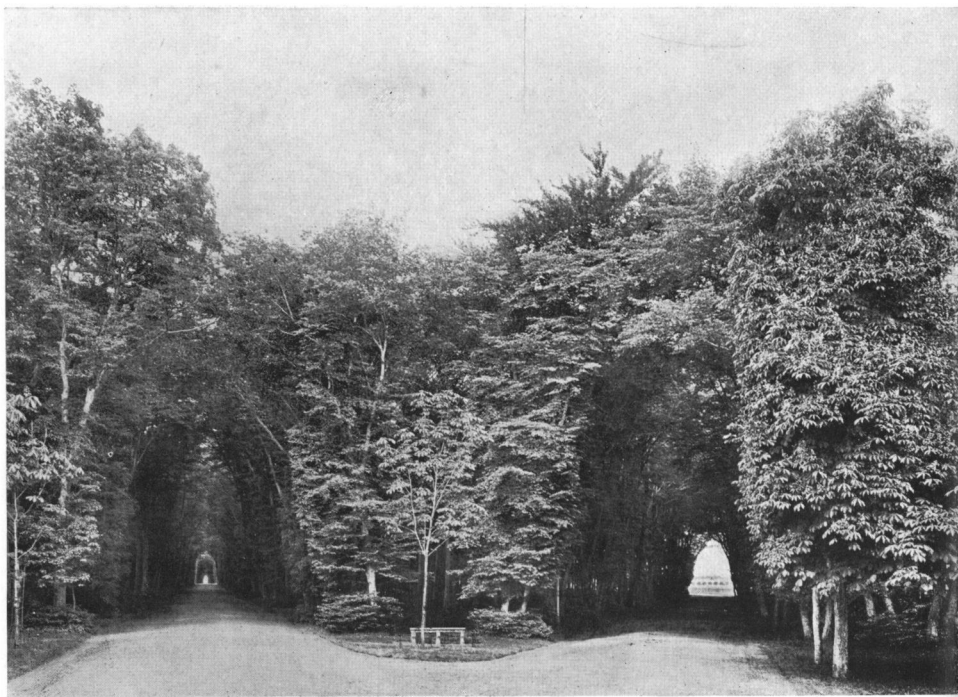
Needless to say such a forest would be alive with game ranging at will, ducks and geese migrating north or south, Mongolian pheasants and our native wild turkeys, grouse and deer, elk and even buffalo.

What the early settlers of the Atlantic seaboard and the aboriginal tribes saw, the people of our time may see again and with keener zest and under happier conditions; and the temperate latitude, favorable to a greater variety of animal and plant life, would permit experiments impossible either farther north or farther south.

The planning of our world's fairs and

cities has already prepared the architectural and engineering professions in America for the study of problems of great magnitude. This same experience can be applied to the elaboration of a design for a forest whose object is not merely to throw the territory back into a state of nature, but, while assisting nature to its highest perfection, to impress it with the grandest and most romantic qualities, of scale, distance, light and shade, and incident, and whatever will enhance its romantic beauty and contribute to its attraction and interest.

Such a forest would naturally become the headquarters and training school of



A FRENCH PLEASURE FOREST

forestry in America, and, largely through its agency, the future school of landscape architecture would be developed.

The first step toward the accomplishment of all this would be to induce Congress to appropriate a sum of money to defray preliminary expenses of investigation and study. The President should then appoint a Commission to collect information, inspect existing forests in foreign countries, and report upon the best methods of procedure. Later, the purchase of land should be undertaken and certain parts of a general plan, selected through the medium of a competition, should be brought under control, and developed in accordance with the lines laid down. As much of the land in question is already thickly grown up in young forest, it would be but a few years before the making of roads, drainage of swamps and other improvements would make an interesting showing.

As to the probable cost of the undertaking, it is fair to assume from the general character of the lands, which are better adapted to forest than to agricultural

purposes, that they could all be acquired at prices varying from twenty-five to fifty dollars an acre. The distance between the two cities is approximately forty miles. A tract forty miles long by one mile wide contains about 25,000 acres. The forest varying in width, the principal bulk of it might be concentrated at one or two advantageous points where land and water conditions best lend themselves to the scheme. At some parts a width of less than half a mile would be all that is necessary, while elsewhere it might be fifteen miles across. Thus a purchase of, say two hundred thousand acres, at a total cost of about six million dollars, would provide all the land required for a grand and impressive development.

This, however, would only be the beginning, and it is to be hoped that within our lifetime the making of roads and necessary improvements might absorb a very considerable sum in excess of the purchase price.

Compared with the wealth of the nation the expenditure of ten million, or

even fifteen million, dollars would not be unreasonable. Louis XIV spent about thirteen millions on Versailles, including the palace. The boulevard connecting the city hall plaza with Fairmont Park, Philadelphia, and the King's Way in London are costing large sums. The departmental and other buildings which will eventually surround the Mall in Washington will cost in the aggregate not less than one hundred millions. Compared with these undertakings, and the immense annual budget of the

portion to their distance from centers of population. It is desirable, therefore, that typical examples of forest creation and conservation should be brought as close to the people as possible. The immediate proximity of the nation's capital, the point of contact of the great railroads north and south, recommends itself as a suitable place to establish a forest reserve upon a scale commensurate with the dignity of the nation, to serve the purpose of recreation and enjoyment in the highest attainable degree for the



WOODWARD GROVE, MADISON, WISCONSIN

Government, fifteen or twenty millions for such a purpose would seem very moderate.

It is in the highest degree desirable to reserve tracts of mountainous country like the Glacier National Park, the Yellowstone National Park, and the Appalachian Forest Reserve, for their scenic beauty and peculiar adaptation to the uses of the pleasure seeker who travels far to enjoy them, and, above all, for purposes of conservation. As places of recreation, however, it must be conceded that their value decreases largely in pro-

great mass of Americans and strangers who come and go, few of whom ever see remote and inaccessible regions, and to add another attraction to the Capital as a place of residence.

Conservation is the greatest interest before the American people today. As we contemplate the idea we are amazed at its universality of application, and we see in it the correction of most of the defects and evils of our time. It is the modern synonym for Platonism as applied both to material and moral issues. It is like the genie in the Arabian Nights

Tales, who, liberated from the bottle, slowly rose into the atmosphere, and then forever refused to be imprisoned again. We have all seen and deplored waste of human effort. We have seen jealousy frustrate, where honor would have promoted, the good enterprise well begun. We have seen our municipalities torn by local politics, their resources wasted, and onerous taxation without due return take the place of wise expansion and modernization.

To teach the people to enjoy legitimate pleasures in a wholesome way is conservation in the highest sense. To pervade the country with a cheerful, joyous spirit is to produce courage, content, temperance as well as moral and physical well being. Nothing conduces to such a temper like a right spiritual adjustment, to be had only, for the great mass of human life, by providing generously for pleasant contact with nature.

The writer has advocated a national forest for Washington, but the idea can be comprehensively applied to thousands of towns and cities throughout the United States.

In Europe numerous villages and towns have their forests, the inhabitants having the privilege of gathering their fuel from them; and generally they are the only source of supply.

Our city parks, with certain admirable exceptions, are abnormally expensive in development and maintenance, and restricted in area. The cutting of grass, the care of greenhouses and the planting of flower beds require an immense outlay of labor with a totally inadequate return. The "dressy" appearance which is generally the result is an offense against taste, and at once condemns them, and renders the lands uninteresting and banal. Therefore, the forest owned and managed by the municipality should be an improvement upon the city park as at present understood in America.

Thus smaller parks within the city and a forest of ample dimensions at a reasonable distance, easily approachable by rapid transit, may be infinitely preferable to a large city park of the usual kind.

The scheme as regards Washington contains no element of startling novelty. It simply contemplates an extension and perfection of the plans so wonderfully begun in the infancy of our political history. The background of virgin forest of those days, the haunt of wild game and wilder men, must be replaced before it is too late for the sake of the ever progressive American, who expects results in the next generation which he has not been able to attain in his own.

The mass of present knowledge and past experience should be examined and reviewed, and extended surveys of actual conditions prepared in order that a program of future development of all the avenues and approaches to Washington shall be intelligently made as early as possible.

In conclusion I recommend this suggestion to all patriotic and intellectual societies—to the American Institute of Architects and the Architectural League of America; and to the Daughters of the American Revolution and the General Federation of Women's Clubs. All societies of national character can afford to give it their careful consideration and active support.

A PAINTER OF AMERICAN INTERIORS

There are two fallacies with the paintings of Edmund C. Tarbell controvert; that the art which produced the Dutch Interiors of the time of Vermeer was peculiar to the place and era; and that all American genre painters have become illustrators. In more than one instance, Mr. Tarbell's American Interiors compare most favorably with the paintings of the famous Dutchmen, and none better than he has pictured our contemporary home life. An excellent illustration is afforded by the painting "Girl Mending," reproduced on the opposite page, which has been lent by its owner, Mr. Robert Treat Paine, to the exhibition set forth recently in the Albright Gallery, Buffalo, and now in the City Museum of Buffalo, and now in the City Museum of St. Louis. Mr. Tarbell's pictures